

Central Intelligence Agency



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Professor James M. Roherty  
 Department of Government and  
 International Studies  
 University of South Carolina  
 Columbia, S. C. 29208

Dear Professor Roherty:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter of 18 June to Mr. McMahon, for whom I am responding. Obviously, you have given careful reflection to the content of the seminar you attended here last month, something we very much appreciate.

I would not presume to elaborate profoundly upon concepts which were treated during the recent seminar; clearly, however, there remains a question in your mind about the relationship between intelligence and policymaking as a broad set of national interests and goals, and between intelligence and "strategies" or alternative modes of action for satisfying those interests and goals.

Our use of the term "intelligence in support of policy" connotes what we believe is a proper separation between those who develop the strategies to achieve policy objectives, as you define them, and those of us in the intelligence community who, among others, provide the data and assessments from which the strategies emerge. For the intelligence apparatus to conceive strategies and then assess their feasibility and possible outcomes is really an infringement of the authority and activities of officials charged with executive action within the government.

Admittedly, there are those who argue that intelligence officers should exercise a greater role in devising strategies or proposing solutions to specific issues, but this raises the age-old dilemma of advocacy versus independent judgment. The Central Intelligence Agency was established, in particular, to provide an independent and, to the maximum extent possible, objective voice in assessing foreign developments vis-a-vis existing or potential courses of action on the part of the United States. This Agency performed exactly that role in significant aspects of the Vietnam war, as well as in many other circumstances. We believe we play a more vital role by maintaining such independence.

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Thank you nonetheless for your stimulating observations and I trust you will not hesitate to challenge this premise with your students and fellow scholars in examining the intelligence process. It is precisely this sort of examination which helps us all to evolve a better understanding of who we are and what we are doing.

Sincerely,

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George V. Lauder  
Director of Public Affairs